



ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

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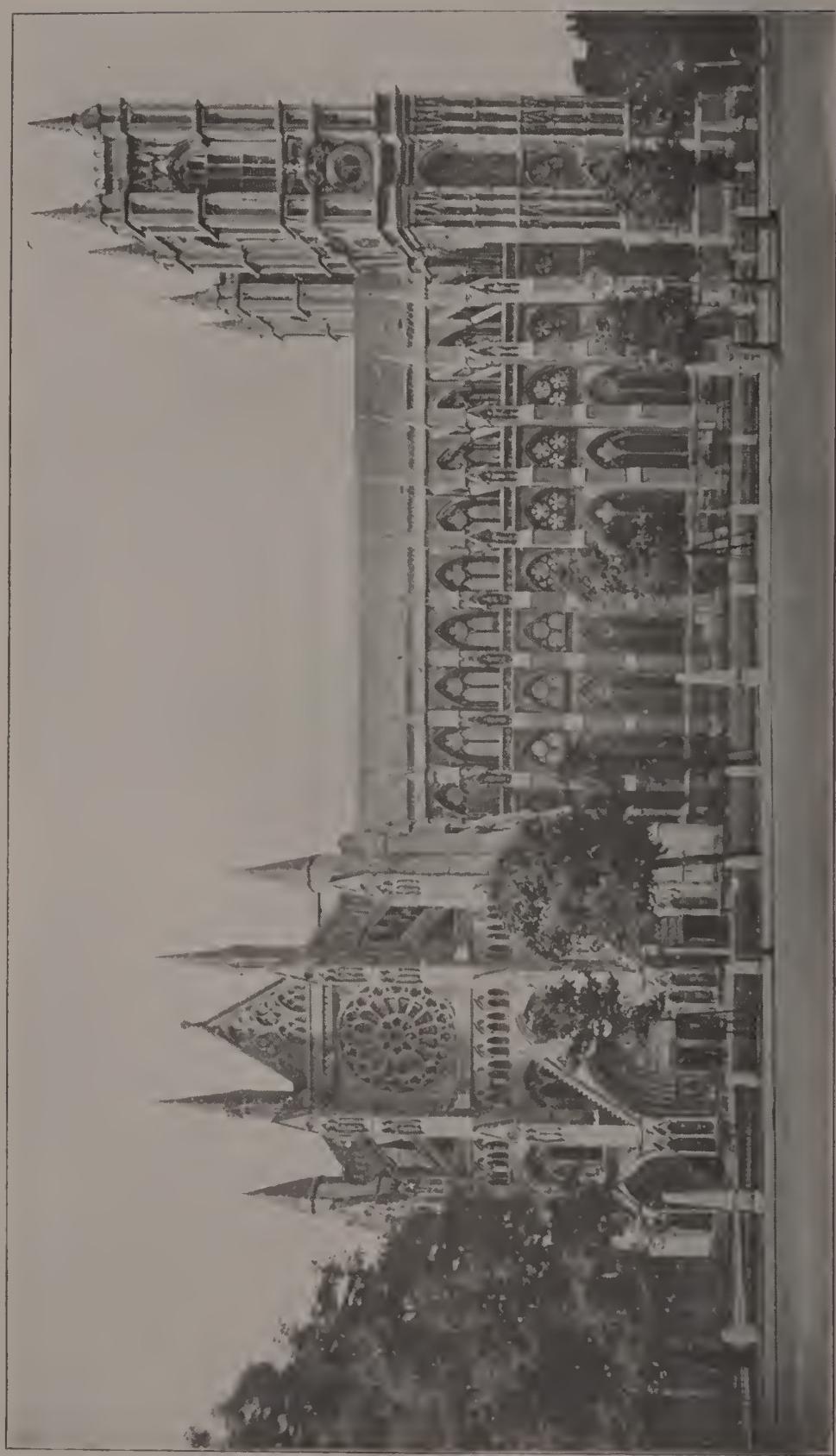


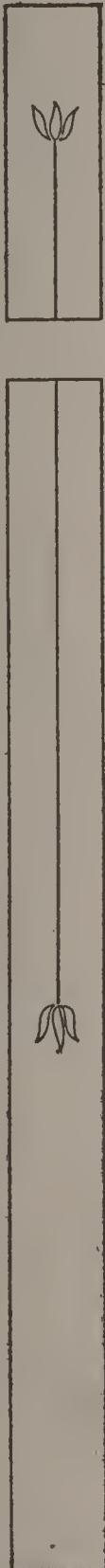
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ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

A CORRESPONDENCE
COURSE IN LITERARY
CRITICISM, INTER-
PRETATION AND
HISTORY



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Point, Wis.*



INCLUDING NUMEROUS
MASTERPIECES



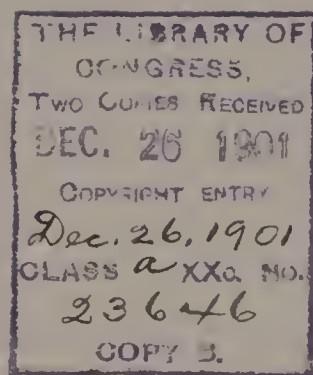
IN EIGHTEEN PARTS
PART FOUR, ESSAYS

CHICAGO
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S8
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Part Four

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Sir Roger de Coverley

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JOSEPH ADDISON

Sir Roger de Coverley

The *Spectator* was first published in March, 1711. It appeared daily and each number was a complete essay dealing with social topics or others of public concern. In no respect did it resemble the modern newspaper except, perhaps, in that of printing a few advertisements, but these were never obtrusive. It might more properly be called a daily magazine, as we understand the term now. With one or two intermissions it was published regularly until 635 numbers had appeared. It contained the choicest and best of the work of Joseph Addison, and much of that of Sir Richard Steele who was his co-worker. The *Spectator* appeared before the modern novel had an existence, and the persistent reappearance of the lightly sketched characters voicing their personal sentiments gave to the publication almost the character of a continued story.

This incomparable series of essays on an almost endless variety of topics was always the advocate of right, and was as unsparing in its ridicule of vice as it was earnest in its pleas for virtue. The style was light and gay enough to attract the frivolous and a deep vein of philosophy that pleased the thoughtful readers ran through every number. The *Spectator* at once became popular

Sir Roger de Coverley

and was a welcome morning visitor at the breakfast table of the wealthy and refined and a daily subject of discussion at the coffee-houses where were gathered the wits and the men of leisure of that brilliant period.

Addison introduced a series of characters who met in a club and under various other conditions, to converse on a great variety of topics. There was a Captain Sentry who stood for the army, and Will Honeycomb who gave the laws relating to the social world; commercial interests were represented by Sir Andrew Freeport; but the choicest character of all, the one which was drawn with the most skill and care and which stands to-day as a representation of the best that fiction can do is Sir Roger de Coverley. He appears in about forty numbers and was manifestly the favorite of Addison. It is said, that he made Steele promise not to meddle with the character, and when it was finally decided to discontinue the *Spectator*, Addison remarked, “By heavens! I’ll kill Sir Roger that nobody else may murder him!” The first description of Sir Roger, probably drawn by Steele, is found in the second paper and is as follows:—

“The first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that

Sir Roger de Coverley

shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behavior, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humor creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being confined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho Square. It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him ‘youngster.’ But being ill used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humors, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house in

Sir Roger de Coverley

both town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behavior, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company; when he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way up stairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities; and, three months ago, gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the Game Act."

The five following essays taken together will give a very good idea of Sir Roger at his home and in the city, though there are a number of other essays that are equally good and as typical of Addison's style.

II. Sir Roger's Home

HAVING often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I¹ last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humor, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the county come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields, I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as

1. The "Spectator," whose "speculations" constitute the Essays.

Sir Roger's Home

he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him : by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his *valet-de-chambre* for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councilor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics, upon my friend's arrival at his country seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time, the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are

Sir Roger's Home

in good humor, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with; on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man, who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation. He heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.²

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humorist; and

2. At this time the clergy were generally regarded as an inferior or dependent class.

Sir Roger's Home

that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colors. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned ; and without staying for my answer, told me that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table ; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the university to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. "My friend," says Sir Roger, "found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish ; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my

Sir Roger's Home

esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years ; and though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants his parishioners. There has not been a lawsuit in the parish since he has lived among them ; if any dispute arises, they apply themselves to him for the decision ; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him, that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity."

As Sir Roger was going on with his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us ; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night), told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the

Sir Roger's Home

whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors, who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as with the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example, and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavor after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

III. A Sunday at Sir Roger's

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon different subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the 'Change, the whole parish politics being gen-

A Sunday at Sir Roger's

erally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a Common Prayer-Book, and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and, indeed, outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's par-

A Sunday at Sir Roger's

ticularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer, and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. The authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behavior; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of

A Sunday at Sir Roger's

the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father, does, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always

A Sunday at Sir Roger's

preaching at the squire; and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers ; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half-year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate as of a man of learning ; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

Studies

Sir Roger's Home.—What idea of Sir Roger's character do we get from his treatment of the Spectator? What idea from his treatment of his servants? What impression of Sir Roger do you get from his manner of choosing a chaplain? What was the real reason for the affection both servants and chaplain had for Sir Roger?

Sunday at Sir Roger's.—What does Sir Roger say and do at church? What do these words and acts show of his relations to the people in his parish? Sum up the traits of character shown by this essay to be Sir Roger's? Picture to yourself the interior of the church, the close of the sermon and then watch Sir Roger as he passes out. Does he seem to you to be a lovable man?

III. Sir Roger at the Theater in London

My friend, Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the club, told me that he had a great mind to see the new tragedy with me, assuring me at the same time, that he had not been at a play these twenty years. "The last I saw," said Sir Roger, "was *The Committee*,¹ which I should not have gone to neither, had not I been told beforehand that it was a good Church-of-England comedy." He then proceeded to inquire of me who this *Distressed Mother*² was; and upon hearing that she was Hector's widow, he told me that her husband was a brave man; and that when he was a schoolboy, he had read his life at the end of the Dictionary.³ My friend asked me, in the next place, if there would not be some danger in coming home late, in case the Mohocks⁴ should be abroad. "I assure you,"

1. By Sir Robert Howard.

2. The "distressed mother," was Andromache, whose devotion to her husband Hector was a frequent theme for the old Greek poets as well as for more modern writers. This play was by Ambrose Philips, one of Addison's friends.

3. Students of the classics read the story in Homer's *Iliad* where his parting with Andromache is one of the best-known passages.

4. Mohawks. Dissolute young men, sometimes of the better classes, banded themselves together and went about the streets frightening people and not infrequently attacking, maiming, or even killing innocent citizens. They were sometimes disguised as Indians, hence the name.

Sir Roger at the Theater

says he, "I thought I had fallen into their hands last night; for I observed two or three lusty black men that followed me halfway up Fleet Street, and mended their pace behind me in proportion as I put on to go away from them. You must know," continued the knight, with a smile, "I fancied they had a mind to hunt me; for I remember an honest gentleman in my neighborhood who was served such a trick in King Charles II's time, for which reason he has not ventured himself in town ever since. I might have shown them very good sport, had this been their design; for as I am an old fox-hunter, I should have turned and dodged, and have played them a thousand tricks they had never seen in their lives before." Sir Roger added that they did not succeed very well in it; "for I threw them out," says he, "at the end of Norfolk Street, where I doubled the corner, and got shelter in my lodgings before they could imagine what was become of me. However," says the knight, "if Captain Sentry will make one with us to-morrow night, and if you will both of you call upon me about four o'clock, that we may be at the house before it is full, I will have my coach in readiness to attend you; for John tells me he has got the fore-wheels mended."

Sir Roger at the Theater

The captain, who did not fail to meet me there at the appointed hour, bid Sir Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same sword which he made use of at the battle of Steenkirk.⁵ Sir Roger's servants, and among the rest my old friend the butler, had, I found, provided themselves with good oaken plants⁶ to attend their master upon this occasion. When we had placed him in his coach, with myself at his left hand, the captain before him, and his butler at the head of his footmen in the rear, we convoyed him in safety to the playhouse, where, after having marched up the entry in good order, the captain and I went in with him, and seated him betwixt us in the pit. As soon as the house was full, and the candles lighted, my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself at the sight of a multitude of people who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common entertainment. I could not but fancy to myself, as the old man stood up in the middle of the pit, that he made a very proper center to a tragic audience. Upon the entering of Pyr-

5. (1692) In Belgium. English defeated by the French.

6. Staff or stick.

Sir Roger at the Theater

rhus,⁷ the knight told me that he did not believe the king of France himself had a better strut. I was, indeed, very attentive to my old friend's remarks, because I looked upon them as a piece of natural criticism, and was well pleased to hear him, at the conclusion of almost every scene, telling me that he could not imagine how the play would end. One while he appeared much concerned for Andromache, and a little while after as much for Hermione,⁸ and was extremely puzzled to think what would become of Pyrrhus.

When Sir Roger saw Andromache's obstinate refusal to her lover's importunities, he whispered me in the ear, that he was sure she would never have him ; to which he added, with a more than ordinary vehemence : " You can't imagine, sir, what it is to have to do with a widow." Upon Pyrrhus his threatening afterward to leave her, the knight shook his head, and muttered to himself, " Ay, do if you can." This part dwelt so much upon my friend's imagination, that, at the close of

7. The characters of this play may all be found in Grecian mythology and are connected directly or indirectly with the Trojan war. Pyrrhus was a famous general who after the death of Hector and the fall of Troy secured Andromache as his prize. Later, after giving her to Helenus he sought to marry Hermione but was slain by Orestes.

8. She was privately engaged to Orestes but her father ignorantly gave her to Pyrrhus. After his murder she was married to Orestes.

Sir Roger at the Theater

the third act, as I was thinking of something else, he whispered me in my ear: "These widows, sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world. But pray," says he, "you that are a critic, is the play according to your dramatic rules, as you call them? Should your people in tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single sentence in this play that I do not know the meaning of."

The fourth act very luckily began before I had time to give the old gentleman an answer. "Well," says the knight, sitting down with great satisfaction, "I suppose we are now to see Hector's ghost." He then renewed his attention, and from time to time fell a-praising the widow. He made, indeed, a little mistake as to one of her pages, whom, at his first entering, he took for Astyanax;⁹ but quickly set himself right in that particular, although he admitted that he should have been very glad to have seen the little boy; "who," says he, "must needs be a very fine child, by the account that is given of him." Upon Hermione's going off with a menace to Pyrrhus, the audience gave a loud clap, to which

9. The little son of Hector and Andromache. When Troy fell he was thrown from a tower by Pyrrhus and killed in the presence of his mother.

Sir Roger at the Theater

Sir Roger added: "On my word, a notable young baggage!"

As there was a very remarkable silence and stillness in the audience during the whole action, it was natural for them to take the opportunity of the intervals between the acts to express their opinion of the players, and of their respective parts. Sir Roger, hearing a cluster of them praise Orestes,¹⁰ struck in with them, and told them that he thought his friend Pylades was a very sensible man. As they were afterward applauding Pyrrhus, Sir Roger put in a second time: "And let me tell you," says he, "though he speaks but little, I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them." Captain Sentry, seeing two or three wags who sat near us, lean with an attentive ear toward Sir Roger, and fearing lest they should smoke¹¹ the knight, plucked him by the elbow, and whispered something in his ear, that lasted till the opening of the fifth

^{10.} Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, was saved by his sister from death at the hands of Clytemnestra, who had murdered her husband, the father of Orestes. He made Pylades his inseparable friend and their names are as familiar to scholars as David and Jonathan or Damon and Pythias. He revenged himself by killing Clytemnestra and her lover, but because he took the punishment into his own hands he was tormented into madness by the Furies. By a long and perilous quest in which he found his long-lost sister, he was restored to reason.

^{11.} Ridicule.

Sir Roger at the Theater

act. The knight was wonderfully attentive to the account which Orestes gives of Pyrrhus his death; and at the conclusion of it, told me it was such a bloody piece of work, that he was glad it was not done upon the stage. Seeing afterward Orestes in his raving fit, he grew more than ordinarily serious, and took occasion to moralize (in his way) upon an evil conscience, adding, that Orestes in his madness looked as if he saw something.

As we were the first that came into the house, so we were the last that went out of it, being resolved to have a clear passage for our old friend, whom we did not care to venture among the jostling of the crowd. Sir Roger went out fully satisfied with his entertainment, and we guarded him to his lodgings in the same manner that we brought him to the play-house; being highly pleased, for my own part, not only with the performance of the excellent piece which had been presented, but with the satisfaction it had given to the old man.

Studies

Gather the criticisms Sir Roger makes on the play and see what traits of character they illustrate. How many times does he speak? Is everything he says said in approval?

Does he seem to consider the people on the stage to be like the characters they represent? Is the play very real to Sir Roger?

These words occur: “— he grew more than ordinarily serious and took occasion to moralize (in his way) upon an evil conscience—.” What was his way of moralizing? What do you suppose he would actually say? Put it in words.

IV. Sir Roger at the Vauxhall

As I was sitting in my chamber, and thinking on a subject for my next *Spectator*, I heard two or three irregular bounces at my landlady's door; and upon the opening of it, a loud cheerful voice inquiring whether the philosopher was at home. The child who went to the door answered very innocently that he did not lodge there. I immediately recollect that it was my good friend Sir Roger's voice, and that I had promised to go with him on the water to Spring Garden, in case it proved a good evening. The knight put me in mind of my promise from the staircase; but told me that if I was speculating, he would stay below till I had done. Upon my coming down, I found all the children of the family got about my old friend, and my landlady herself, who was a notable prating gossip, engaged in a conference with him; being mightily pleased with his stroking her little boy on the head, and bidding him be a good child, and mind his book.

We were no sooner come to the Temple stairs, but we were surrounded with a crowd of watermen, offering their respective services.

Sir Roger at the Vauxhall

Sir Roger, after having looked about him very attentively, spied one with a wooden leg, and immediately gave him orders to get his boat ready. As we were walking toward it, "You must know," said Sir Roger, "I never make use of anybody to row me that has not either lost a leg or an arm. I would rather bate him a few strokes of his oar than not employ an honest man that has been wounded in the queen's service. If I was a lord or a bishop, and kept a barge, I would not put a fellow in my livery that had not a wooden leg."

My old friend, after having seated himself, and trimmed the boat with his coachman, who being a very sober man, always serves for ballast on these occasions, we made the best of our way for Foxhall.¹ Sir Roger obliged the waterman to give us the history of his right leg; and hearing that he had left it at La Hogue,² with many particulars which passed in that glorious action, the knight, in the triumph of his heart, made several reflections on the greatness of the British nation; as, that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen; that we could never be in danger of popery so long

1. Afterward Vauxhall.

2. On the northwest of France, off which the English gained a great victory over the French fleet in 1692.

Sir Roger at the Vauxhall

as we took care of our fleet; that the Thames was the noblest river in Europe; that London Bridge was a greater piece of work than any of the seven wonders of the world; with many other honest prejudices which naturally cleave to the heart of a true Englishman.

After some short pause, the old knight turning about his head twice or thrice, to take a survey of this great metropolis, bid me observe how thick the city was set with churches, and that there was scarce a single steeple on this side Temple Bar. “A most heathenish sight!” says Sir Roger: “there is no religion at this end of the town. The fifty new churches will very much mend the prospect; but church work is slow, church-work is slow!”

I do not remember I have anywhere mentioned, in Sir Roger’s character, his custom of saluting everybody that passes by him with a good-morrow, or a good-night. This the old man does out of the overflowings of his humanity, though at the same time it renders him so popular among all his country neighbors, that it is thought to have gone a good way in making him once or twice knight of the shire. He can not forbear this exercise of benevolence even in town, when he meets

Sir Roger at the Vauxhall

with anyone in his morning or evening walk. It broke from him to several boats that passed by us upon the water, but to the knight's great surprise, as he gave the good-night to two or three young fellows a little before our landing, one of them, instead of returning the civility, asked what queer old put³ we had in the boat, and whether he was not ashamed to go out at night at his years? with a great deal of the like Thames ribaldry. Sir Roger seemed a little shocked at first; but at length, assuming a face of magistracy, told us, "that if he were a Middlesex justice he would make such vagrants know that her majesty's subjects were no more to be abused by water than by land."

We were now arrived at Spring Garden, which is exquisitely pleasant at this time of year. When I consider the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choirs of birds that sung upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mahometan paradise. Sir Roger told me, it put him in mind of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. "You must under-

3. Pronounced *put* and meaning *rustic*.

Sir Roger at the Vauxhall

stand," says the knight, "there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale. Ah, Mr. Spectator! the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale!" He here fetched a deep sigh, and was falling into a fit of musing; when a mask, who came behind him, gave him a gentle tap upon the shoulder, and asked him if he would drink a bottle of mead with her? But the knight, being startled at so unexpected familiarity, and displeased to be interrupted in his thoughts of the widow, told her she was a wanton baggage, and bid her go about her business.

We concluded our walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef. When we had done eating ourselves, the knight called a waiter to him and bid him carry the remainder to the waterman that had but one leg. I perceived the fellow stared upon him at the oddness of the message, and was going to be saucy; upon which I ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look.

V. Death of Sir Roger

We last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honor of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several

Death of Sir Roger

circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

“Honoured Sir¹. —‘Knowing that you was
‘my old Master’s good Friend, I could not
‘forbear sending you the melancholy News
‘of his Death, which has afflicted the whole
‘Country as well as his poor Servants, who
‘loved him, I may say, better than we did our
‘Lives. I am afraid he caught his Death at
‘the last County Sessions, where he would go
‘to see justice done to a poor Widow Woman
‘and her Fatherless Children, that had been
‘wronged by a neighboring Gentleman; for
‘you know, Sir, my good Master was always
‘the poor Man’s Friend. Upon his coming
‘home, the first complaint he made was, that
‘he had lost his Roast-Beef Stomach, not
‘being able to touch a Sirloin which was
‘served up according to Custom; and you
‘know he used to take great Delight in it.
‘From that time forward he grew worse and
‘worse, but still kept a good Heart to the
‘last. Indeed, we were once in great Hope
‘of his Recovery, upon a kind Message that
‘was sent him from the Widow Lady whom

1. This letter is printed as it was in the original edition of the essays. It illustrates the style of printing throughout the *Spectator*.

Death of Sir Roger

' he had made love to the Forty last Years of
' his Life; but this only proved a Light'ning
' before Death. He has bequeathed to this
' Lady, as a token of his Love, a great Pearl
' Necklace, and a couple of Silver Bracelets
' set with Jewels, which belonged to my good
' old Lady his Mother. He has bequeathed
' the fine white Gelding that he used to ride
' a-hunting upon to his Chaplain, because he
' thought he would be kind to him; and has
' left you all his Books. He has moreover
' bequeathed to the Chaplain a very pretty
' Tenement, with good Lands about it. It
' being a very cold day when he made his
' Will, he left for Mourning, to every Man in
' the Parish, a great Frize-Coat, and to every
' Woman a black Riding-Hood. It was a mov-
' ing Sight to see him take leave of his poor
' Servants, commanding us all for our Fidelity,
' whilst we were not able to speak a Word for
' weeping. As we most of us are grown Gray-
' headed in our Dear Master's Service, he has
' left us Pensions and Legacies, which we may
' live very comfortably upon, the remaining
' part of our Days. He has bequeath'd a great
' deal more in charity, which is not yet come
' to my Knowledge; and it is peremptorily
' said in the Parish that he has left Mony to

Death of Sir Roger

'build a Steeple to the Church; for he was
'heard to say some time ago, that if he lived
'two Years longer, *Coverley* Church should
'have a Steeple to it. The Chaplain tells
'everybody he made a very good End, and
'never speaks of him without Tears. He was
'buried, according to his own Directions,
'among the Family of the Coverleys, on the
'Left Hand of his Father Sir *Arthur*. The
'Coffin was carried by Six of his Tenants,
'and the Pall held up by Six of the *Quorum*.
'The whole Parish follow'd the Corps with
'heavy Hearts, and in their Mourning Suits;
'the Men in Frize, and the Women in Rid-
'ing-Hoods. Captain *SENTRY*, my Master's
'Nephew, has taken Possession of the Hall-
'House and the whole Estate. When my old
'Master saw him a little before his Death, he
'shook him by the Hand, and wished him Joy
'of the Estate which was falling to him, de-
'siring him only to make a good Use of it, and
'to pay the several Legacies and the Gifts of
'Charity, which he told him he had left as
'Quit rents upon the Estate. The Captain
'truly seems a courteous Man, though he says
'but little. He makes much of those whom
'my Master loved, and shows great Kindness
'to the old House-dog, that you know my poor

Death of Sir Roger

' Master was so fond of. . It would have gone
' to your Heart to have heard the Moans the
' dumb Creature made on the Day of my
' Master's Death. He has ne'er joyed him-
' self since; no more has any of us. 'T was
' the melancholiest Day for the poor People
' that ever happened in *Worcestershire*. This
' is all from, *Honoured Sir*,

Your most Sorrowful Servant,

EDWARD BISCUIT.

'P. S.— My Master desired, some Weeks
before he died, that a Book, which comes up
' to you by the Carrier, should be given to Sir
' *Andrew Freeport* in his Name."

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew² found that they related to two or three points which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared

2. In several of the essays Sir Roger is in very sharp debate with Sir Andrew.

Death of Sir Roger

at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's writing burst into tears and put the book in his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.

Studies

At the Vauxhall.—How did Sir Roger select his boatman? What light does this throw on his character? What does he mean by saying, “Church-work is slow, church-work is slow”? What was Sir Roger’s habit in saluting people? What did this show of his character? Find other incidents in this essay that manifest traits of character. Sum up, then, the various traits we have seen and write in full your estimate of his character.

Death.—Is the butler’s letter ludicrous or pathetic? Does the letter further intensify the impression you have of Sir Roger’s character? Does it change your impression at all? What trait is shown by his legacy to Sir Andrew Freeport? Does Sir Roger seem to you like a real human being? Has Addison accomplished this creation more by directly telling you what kind of a man Sir Roger was or by detailing incidents which reflected the man’s real self?

Joseph Addison



Joseph Addison

Sylvester

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Joseph Addison

1672-1719

Joseph Addison was one of the brightest lights of the brilliant age of Queen Anne. He was prominent in politics and served his party with almost obsequious fervor. Though addicted to the excessive use of wine and of tobacco, yet his character was otherwise spotless and to know him was always considered an honor. He was modest to a degree and though a most brilliant talker and the best of company to his friends the approach of a single stranger would put him to confusion and render him almost speechless. He was awkward in his manners though of sedate and dignified carriage. No one had more brilliant or more devoted friends and few have had more critical enemies. These say he was selfish and ambitious and he is charged with having deserted his friends to forward his own advancement. His ambition led him to a persistent courtship of the Countess of Warwick, the mother of the young Earl to whom he had been appointed tutor. Though he was successful at last, his marriage brought him no happiness for his wife treated him in a most contemptuous manner and never failed to taunt him with their difference in rank. He was a scholarly man, a graduate of Oxford, and in all his essays he pleads for a high standard of public and pri-

Joseph Addison

vate morality. On the whole his is a dignified and pleasing personality that lends a peculiar charm to his words, for it has been a frequent occurrence in the history of literature that little harmony existed between the character of an author and the tenor of his writings.

Self-Reliance

RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Self=Reliance

Ne te quæsiveris extra.¹

“ Man is his own star; and the soul that can
Render an honest and perfect man
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him falls early or too late.
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.”

Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Honest Man's Fortune*.

Cast the bantling on the rocks,
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat;
Wintered with the hawk and fox,
Power and speed be hands and feet.

I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the

1. Freely translated this means, Rely on yourself.

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Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato,² and Milton, is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they*, thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full

². Plato, great Athenian philosopher, the pupil of Socrates (429-347 B. C.)

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of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events.

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Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes. That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm; and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not

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think the youth has no force, because he can not speak to you and me. Hark ! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat*³ he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There

3. Merited applause.

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is no Lethe⁴ for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence,—must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of our own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and

4. Forgetfulness.

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you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested,— "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the devil's child, I will live then from the devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barba-

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does, why should I not say to him, "Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home." Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim.* I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee thou foolish philanthropist that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but

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your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots; and the thousandfold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar which by-and-by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily nonappearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forebear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I can not

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consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible Society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base house keepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do

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your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us, and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of

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the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean, "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a slow usurping wilfulness grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The bystanders look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is

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decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should

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clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.—“Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.”—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras⁵ was misunderstood, and Socrates,⁶ and Jesus, and Luther,⁷ and Copernicus,⁸ and Galileo,⁹ and Newton,¹⁰ and every pure and wise spirit that

5. Grecian philosopher (586–506 B. C.) compelled by opponents to retire from public life.

6. Grecian philosopher (about 469 B. C.). Condemned to death as an enemy of the gods of the state and a corrupter of youth, he drank the hemlock cup with composure.

7. German religious reformer (1483–1546) cited to meet the Emperor, refused to recant, and was in frequent and deadly peril.

8. A famous astronomer (1473–1543) who advocated the theory that the sun is the center of the solar system, and who foreshadowed many of the truths of the modern science.

9. Italian physicist (1564–1642) summoned before the Inquisition and compelled to recant his proposition that the earth moves, was imprisoned, and finally banished.

10. English mathematician (1642–1727) engaged in lively controversies with other scientists over his theories of light and of falling bodies.

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ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I can not doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike

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they seem. These varieties are lost sight of when seen at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before, as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed an united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's¹¹ voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and

^{11.} William Pitt (1708-1778) an eloquent and highly patriotic English statesman.

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America into Adams's¹² eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemeralis.¹³ It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted¹⁴ and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan¹⁵ fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot

12. Samuel Adams (1722-1803) a prominent member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence; sometimes called *The Father of the Revolution*.

13. A daily journal — of little permanent value.

14. Officially condemned.

15. The courageous Grecian soldiers whose signal to battle was given on the fife.

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of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the center of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes the place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; — and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony;¹⁶ the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox;¹⁷ Methodism, of Wesley; Aboli-

16. St. Antony (250 to 356) a hermit of Upper Egypt, founder of the doctrine of religious seclusion, self-denial and devotion.

17. George Fox (1624-1691) the English founder of the Friends or Quakers.

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tion, of Clarkson.¹⁸ Scipio,¹⁹ Milton called “the height of Rome ;” and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charityboy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, “Who are you, sir ?” Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict ; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead drunk in the street, carried to the duke’s house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke’s bed, and, on

18. Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846). English philanthropist, through whose influence the English Parliament declared the slave trade illegal in 1807.

19. Scipio Africanus Major (234 to 184 B. C.). Defeated Hannibal and ended the war with Carthage. Greatest Roman general before Cæsar.

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his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred²⁰ and Scanderbeg²¹ and Gustavus?²² Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views,

20. Alfred the Great (849-901) known as the greatest of England's early kings—great not only in a military sense but great also in point of character and public influence.

21. Alexander Bey, an Albanian prince (1404-1467) who freed his province from Mohammedan rule after a most remarkable military career in which he was but once defeated.

22. Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden (1594-1632), a brilliant leader against Russia and Germany, who established himself firmly on the throne and conquered large portions of Germany. He was killed at the battle of Lutzen.

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the luster will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science — baffling star, without parallax,²³ without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The

²³. The apparent displacement of objects when seen from different points of view.

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inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis can not go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterward see them as appearances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom and which can not be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every

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man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;— the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind,— although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the center of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole.

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Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,— means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,— one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their center by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be anything more than a cheerful analogue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say “I think,” “I am,” but quotes some saint or sage. He

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is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones ; they are for what they are ; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose ; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He can not be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,— painfully recollecting the exact words

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they spoke; afterward, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid; probably can not be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this: When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name; — the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike

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beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, it perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay that former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes*; for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present, there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than

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I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which can not help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vege-

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table, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I have all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the

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extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at once at thy closet door and say,— “Come out unto us.” But keep thy state; come not into their conclusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. “What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love.”

If we can not at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, “O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth’s. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less

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than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife,— but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I can not break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you can not, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by my hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last."— But so you may give these friends pain. Yes, but I can not sell my liberty and my power, to

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save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfill your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*, or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat, and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of

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humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a task-master. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, can not satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and so do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion, we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the

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finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not "studying a profession," for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him;— and that teacher shall restore

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the life of man to splendor and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower

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kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's *Bonduca*,²⁴ when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies, —

“ His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
Our valors are our best gods.”

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work, and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate

24. Bonduca, a drama written by John Fletcher (1576-1625). The characters are historical and the scene of the play is laid in ancient Britain.

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him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke,²⁵ a Lavoisier,²⁶ a Hutton,²⁷ a Bentham,²⁸ a Fourier,²⁹ it imposes its classification on other men, and lo ! a new system. In

25. John Locke (1632-1704), English philosopher. His most famous work, *The Human Understanding*.

26. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, French chemist (1743-1794), the founder of the modern science of chemistry.

27. James Hutton (1726-1797), Scotch geologist noted for his theory accounting for most geological phenomena by igneous fusion.

28. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1834), English philosopher, the founder of the utilitarian school which held that the greatest good to the greatest number should be the end and aim of all political institutions.

29. François Marie Charles Fourier, French socialist (1772-1837). He advocated a system under which mankind worked in communities and earnings were distributed according to an established ratio among capital, labor, and talent.

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proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty, and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating everything to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil finds his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They can not imagine how you aliens have any right to see, —how you can see. "It must be somehow that you stole the light from us." They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it

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their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Traveling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveler; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat

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greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Traveling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of traveling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the traveling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments;

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our opinions, our tastes, our faculties lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington,

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or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare. Do that which is assigned you and you can not hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart and thou shalt reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is Christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration.

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For everything that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under. But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveler tells us truly, strike the savage with a broadaxe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory;

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his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms some vigor of wild virtue. For every stoic was a stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion,³⁰ Socrates, Anaxagoras,³¹ Diogenes,³² are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his

30. Athenian general (b. about 400 B. C.). Noted as well for the simplicity and purity of his character.

31. Grecian philosopher (500-428), instructor of Socrates and other renowned men of the Age of Pericles.

32. The most famous of the Cynic philosophers of Greece (412-323). Lived a most rigidly abstemious life and exposed the follies of his neighbors by good-natured ridicule.

Sel̄t=Reliance

turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Bering accomplished so much in their fishing-boats, as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor, and disencumbering it of all aids. "The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army," says Las Casas, "without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill and make his bread himself."

Self-Reliance

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime ; then he feels that it is not having ; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire ; and what the man acquires is living property, which does

Self-Reliance

not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or portion of life," said the Caliph Ali, "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex ! The Democrats from New Hampshire ! The Whigs of Maine ! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends ! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town ! Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for

Self=Reliance

good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

Studies on Self-Reliance

Studies

This essay has been selected because it is an example of the moral and didactic style and while giving a glimpse into the author's mind and an intimation of his own self-reliant spirit it is also in itself a strong incentive to personal effort. The student of this course may find much to assist him in its appeals to independence of action.

Make an analysis of the thought. Is the essay logical in its arrangement? Is there unity of thought throughout? Does the author hold the reader's attention closely to this prominent line of reasoning, or does he allow it to flag? Does he at times even distract the reader by the introduction of random observations and wandering thoughts?

Compared with Bacon's essays, is there more attention to beauty of form? Is there as graceful and charming a method of treating the subject as Lamb uses? Are the sentences as sonorous and as eloquent as those to be found in Ruskin? Do you find any similarity of purpose in the *Crown of Wild Olive* and this *Self-Reliance*?

Find many figures of speech in this essay. Which figure does Emerson use most frequently? Which of the four do you consider the most effective figure? Does he make use of many scriptural allusions? Does he show that he is familiar with mythological stories?

Studies

To what passages do you take exception? Do you object to them because they are untrue or because you do not like the form in which they appear? If you find a statement that you do not believe, formulate in words the reasons for your disbelief, then try to find what possible arguments Emerson could bring to sustain his position.

Expand the thought of this sentence into a paragraph of ten or more lines: "Life only avails, not the having lived."

Explain what Emerson means by saying, "Traveling is a fool's paradise."

Find the following phrases, complete the thought, and learn the quotation.

"— every heart vibrates to that iron string."

"Nothing is at last sacred but —."

"With consistency a great soul has —."

"If we live truly, we shall —."

"Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which —."

"An institution is the lengthened shadow of —."

"Insist on yourself; never —."

"Whoso would be a man, must be —."

"The virtue in most request is —."

"A character is like an acrostic or —."

Find ten more quotations that strike your fancy. Do you find in this essay more apt expressions of profound thought than you have found in the other essays of this number?

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Ralph Waldo Emerson

1803-1882

A man true to his convictions under all circumstances, a husband and father devoted to his family, a faithful friend deeply beloved by everyone who knew him, such was Emerson, the poet and philosopher. Of the best New England blood, he was the product of generations of culture and scholarship. His father was poor and, dying when Emerson was but eight years old, left his family indigent. The mother determined that this son, the second of five, should have a college education and by hard work and close economy on the part of both it was accomplished. In after years Emerson always regarded the severity of his self-denial as a valuable discipline and a considerable factor in his development.

He graduated at eighteen, taught school for several years, was a cleryman for six years and then gave up his calling because he could not conscientiously preach what he did not believe. At the age of thirty on his return from Europe he wrote in his diary as follows:

"The highest revelation is that God is in every man. Milton describes himself in his letter to Diodati as enamored of moral perfection. He did not love it more than I. That which I can not yet declare has been my angel from childhood

Ralph Waldo Emerson

until now. It has separated me from men. It has watered my pillow. It has driven sleep from my bed. It has tortured me for my guilt. It has inspired me with hope. It can not be defeated by my defeats. It can not be questioned, though all the martyrs apostatize. It is always the glory that shall be revealed, it is the ‘open secret’ of the universe. And it is only the feebleness and dust of the observer that makes it the future; the whole is *now* potentially at the bottom of his heart. It is not a sufficient reply to the red and angry worldling, coloring as he affirms his unbelief, to say, ‘Think on living hereafter. I have to do no more than you with that question of another life. I believe in *this* life. I believe it continues. As long as I am here, I plainly read my duties as writ with pencil of fire. They speak not of death, they are woven of immortal thread.’”

This was the rule and guide of his life and he followed it devoutly,—followed the doctrine and led others with him for it is the key-note of his philosophy.

Emerson lived at Concord, Massachusetts, near the homes of the Alcotts, of Thoreau, and of Hawthorne. His home was a plain square white house, shaded by a beautiful grove of elms. Here most of his writing was done and here his friends gathered about him. His essays, lectures and addresses form the bulk of his published works though he wrote many beautiful poems. *Threnody*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

is an exquisite elegy in which he pours out his grief at the death of his little son Waldo who died at the age of four. He was not an orator but was an attractive speaker. George William Curtis says of one of his talks:—

“It was not a sermon, nor an oration, nor an argument; it was the perfection of talk; the talk of a poet, of a philosopher, of a scholar. Its wit was a rapier, smooth, sharp, incisive, delicate, exquisite. The blade was pure as an icicle. You would have sworn that the hilt was diamond.”

As a reformer, Emerson’s work must not be underestimated. His faultless character and strong personality gave increased vitality to a doctrine that made no enemies except those who were too illiberal to consider the sincerity and truth of the man who advocated freedom of intellect and extolled the power of soul.

Compensation is the title of the essay which foreshadows much of his philosophy and whose principle constantly recurs in his other essays. *The American Scholar* is a famous address in which he pleads for a broader and more liberal scholarship, for the development of the whole man. *Behavior*, *Culture*, *Power*, and *Wealth* are titles of other excellent essays. Though sometimes his writings are a little obscure the reader is well repaid for any labor he expends in deciphering the meaning, and on every page he finds something to admire and enjoy.

**Additional Essays
and
Essayists**

Essays and Essayists

Additional reading in essays may be found in almost any library and the range of subjects covered is so great that every person can find something that will especially interest him. So far we have said little or nothing of the great number of essays in literary criticism which in many cases are much finer than the work they criticize, and have outlived their subjects. Sometimes the essayist has seized upon the very subject-matter of a book, has treated it in a far more thoughtful and discriminating manner, and has finally put it into better and more enduring form. Many of these essays are sympathetic interpretations of the purpose and genius of still greater writers, and give the reader a more lucid conception of the peculiar powers of the person discussed. The essays written upon Milton and Burns and Emerson would fill volumes, while those that have had Shakespeare for a subject would make a library.

Lord Macaulay was an essayist of great power and popularity. Among his *Essays Critical and Historical*, the ones on *Milton* and *Addison* are among the best and many readers enjoy the vigorous treatment of *Warren Hastings*. Macaulay's style is rhetorical and declamatory, reminding one of the eloquent speeches of his

Essays and Essayists

day. But he is clear and brilliant and shows a wonderful range of knowledge, though its value is somewhat lessened by his intense partisanship.

Thomas De Quincey wrote many charming essays in melodious English marked by great precision in the use of words. His *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* is a whimsical thing full of absurd argument and humorous comparisons: “If once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination.” *Joan of Arc*, *The Revolt of the Tartars*, and *The English Mail Coach* are examples of his best style.

Essays in Criticism by Matthew Arnold is a volume of great interest to the more advanced student of literature. In this, *The Study of Poetry*, *Keats*, *Wordsworth*, and *Shelley*, are especially worthy of study. The breadth of Arnold’s view and his scholarship together with the philosophical turn of his mind, make him rather a difficult writer for many.

James Anthony Froude in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* gives a great number of interesting essays on historical and miscellaneous topics.

William M. Thackeray in *The Four Georges* gives a striking picture of England during the reign of the kings mentioned, and in the *Roundabout Papers* are other entertaining and satirical sketches.



Essays and Essayists

James Russell Lowell is the most scholarly of the American critics and will be enjoyed by those who like sharp criticism couched in poetic prose and abounding in delicate and pertinent allusions. He writes on Shakespeare, Pope, Carlyle, and other English writers, as well as upon Emerson, Thoreau, Abraham Lincoln, and other great Americans. *My Study Windows* and *Among My Books* contain his critical essays and in *Fireside Travels* are those of a miscellaneous type.

Other critical and miscellaneous essays of great excellence are to be found in *Literary and Social Essays* and *Essays from the Easy Chair* by George William Curtis; *My Study Fire* and other books by Hamilton W. Mabie; *Literature and Life* by Edwin P. Whipple; and *My Literary Passions* by William D. Howells.

John Burroughs has given us a number of most delightful and thoroughly sympathetic studies into nature and the living things of wood and field. He is an accurate and patient observer and has a graceful style that pleases every reader. Among his books are *Birds and Bees*, *Pepacton*, and *Wake Robin*.

Within recent days there have been published a great many essays, lighter in tone and far better adapted to the taste of the public but not inferior in style to any we have mentioned. Among those who write in this class, Robert Louis Stevenson stands at the head and in *Virginibus Puerisque*

Essays and Essayists

and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* is material for many a pleasant hour.

Austin Dobson in *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* gives a number of entertaining pictures on miscellaneous topics of the epoch the title suggests.

Kenneth Grahame writes charmingly, idealizing the days of childhood in *Dream Days* and *The Golden Age*.

Essays in Idleness and *Points of View* by Agnes Repplier are two books whose view of things is original and whose manner of presenting is often humorous.

Little Rivers by Henry Van Dyke contains several very appreciative nature essays that read as though the author's heart were in them.

Review Questions

Review Questions

1. In order that a person may master the thought of any selection what details must he study?
2. Compare Bacon's *Nature in Men* with *The Ambitious Guest*, showing how the essay differs from the story.
3. Compare, in respect to figures, Lamb's *The Praise of Chimney Sweepers* with Bacon's *On Studies*.
4. Find in the first ten pages of *The Crown of Wild Olive* as many metaphors as possible.
5. Does Addison make Sir Roger de Coverley as vivid a character as Hawthorne made of Ernest?
6. Does the character of Sir Roger de Coverley develop under Addison's hands?
7. Find in *Self-Reliance* ten passages which seem to you remarkable for their depth of thought.
8. Does the death of Sir Roger seem to you the natural end of such a character? Do you find yourself in sympathy with the friends and moved by the death of the old gentleman?
9. Who makes the more frequent use of the simile, Addison or Lamb? Determine your answer to this by counting the number of similes in twenty pages of each writer.
10. Study *The Chimney Sweepers* in comparison with *The Ambitious Guest*. In which do you find the greater number of difficult and unusual words? In which, the happier use of descriptive words?

Memoranda

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